

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 DPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 IO-12 AID-20 RSR-01 INRE-00 /115 W

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P 040245 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9590

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 5563

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR APRIL 3, 1973

FOL TEL SENT SAIGON FROM CAN THO APR 3, 1973 RPTD FOR YOUR INFO :

QUOTE CAN THO 117

1. SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTIVITY IS SCATTERED WITH CONTINUED FIGHTING IN DINH TUONG AND THE HONG NGU AREA OF KIEN PHONG. BAG LIEU SUFFERED A " MINI- OFFENSIVE" LAST WEEK DURING A LOCAL VC/ NVA ATTEMPT TO OPEN SECONDARY ROUTES OF SUPPLY. THE DEMOCRACY PARTY IN KIEN HOA WILL TRY TO EXPEDITE GOVERNMENT SERVICES FOR PARTY MEMBERS. IN KIEN GIANG, THE DP WILL PROBABLY FIELD VILLAGE COUNCIL CANDIDATES ALTHOUGH NO ORDERS TO DO SO HAVE BEEN RECEIVED TO DATE. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: SIXTY- FOUR VC INITIATED INCIDENTS OCCURRED ON APRIL 2 AND RVNAF CASUALTIES REMAINED RELATIVELY HIGH WITH 14 KIA AND 100 WIA AS COMPARED TO 51 VC KIA. DINH TUONG, WITH 23, AND KIEN PHONG WITH 19, LEAD THE INCIDENT PARADE. MOST OF THE KIEN PHONG INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN THE HONG NGU AREU WHERE A RENEWED ARTILLERY DUEL BROKE OUT. THE SITUATION IN OTHER PROVINCES REMAINS RELATIVELY QUIET ALTHOUGH BAC LIEU CONTINUES TO REPORT THE RESULTS OF A " MINI- OFFENSIVE" LAST WEEK DURING WHICH THE GVN HAD 5 OBS OVERRUN.

3. ICCS: THE REGION VII HUNGARIAN CHAIRMAN ANNOUNCED APRIL 2

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THAT THE HUNGARIAN DELEGATION WOULD NOT WORK FROM 1200 HOURS APRIL 3 TO 2400 HOURS APRIL 4 IN OBSERVANCE OF HUNGARIAN NATIONAL DAY.

4. COMMUNIST ACTIVITY: (A). VC ACTIVITY IN BAC LIEU LATE LAST WEEK REACHED THE LEVEL OF A "MINI-OFFENSIVE" ACCORDING TO US OFFICIALS THERE. TWO MORE OUTPOSTS WERE OVERRUN APRIL 1 BRINGING TO FIVE THE TOTAL IN THE LAST WEEK. IN ADDITION TO CONSIDERABLE CASUALTIES, THESE ATTACKS HAVE COST THE GVN MORE THAN 50 M16 RIFLES. AT LEAST ONE OUTPOST WAS OVERRUN WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF AN INSIDE TRAITOR. A FIVE-MAN JGS TEAM VISITED BAC LIEU MARCH 31 TO INVESTIGATE THE THREE EARLIER OVERRUNS. THE VINH CHAU DISTRICT CHIEF MAY WELL BE RELIEVED AS A RESULT OF THE INVESTIGATION. THE QUAN LONG ICCS TEAM ALSO VISITED SEVERAL OF THE OVERRUN OUTPOSTS APRIL 1, BUT HAS NOT ANNOUNCED THE RESULTS OF ITS INVESTIGATION.

(B). DURING THE WEEK OF MARCH 25-31, MR IV HAD 53 RETURNEES. KIEN GIANG LED THE REGION WITH 29 RETURNEES, 20 OF THEM IN A MASS DEFECTION OF GUERRILLAS FROM BINH TRI VILLAGE IN KIEN LUONG DISTRICT. VC DEFECTIONS APPEAR TO BE INCREASING IN A NUMBER OF PROVINCES. IN KIEN HOA, FOR EXAMPLE, OVER 30 HOI CHANH WERE RECEIVED DURING THE MONTH OF MARCH. AT THE SAME TIME WE UNDERSTAND RF/PF DESERTIONS MAY BE INCREASING. RATHER THAN CREDITING EITHER SIDE WITH IMPROVED PROPAGANDA APPEALS, WE PREFER TO CONCLUDE THAT WITH THE CEASEFIRE BOTH SIDES ARE FINDING IT MORE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN THE MORALE AND COMMITMENT OF THEIR LOCAL FORCES.

5. GVN ACTIVITY: (A). THE VICE CONSUL IN SOC TRANG HAS LEARNED THAT PROVINCE LEVEL OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH SUPPLY OFFICES HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN SLATED FOR TRANSFER AS A RESULT OF MR IV COMMANDER MGEN NGHI'S ANTI-CORRUPTION DRIVE.

(B). THE DEMOCRACY PARTY OFFICES IN KIEN HOA ARE REPORTEDLY BEING ORGANIZED TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR PARTY MEMBERS. THEY WILL FACILITATE PAPERWORK, GAIN ACCESS TO OFFICIALS, AND GENERALLY CIRCUMVENT THE GVN BUREAUCRACY. THE VICE CONSUL IN KIEN HOA COMMENTS THAT THE PARTY IS IN A GOOD POSITION TO CARRY OUT SUCH A PROGRAM BECAUSE ITS CURRENT MEMBERSHIP IS LARGELY COMPOSED OF CIVIL SERVANTS. HE ADDS THAT THIS COULD CAUSE THE PARTY TO GROW HANDSOMELY AS MEMBERSHIP WILL BE A SMALL PRICE TO PAY TO AVOID THE GVN BUREAUCRACY.

(C). ACCORDING TO THE DEPUTY PROVINCE CHIEF, NO POLITICAL PARTIES OTHER THAN THE DP HAVE QUALIFIED UNDER DECREE 060 IN KIEN GIANG. HE ANTICIPATES, HOWEVER, THAT BOTH THE FREEDOM PARTY AND

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THE SOCIAL DEMOCRAT ALLIANCE WILL EVENTUALLY QUALIFY. HE ALSO

TOLD OUR VICE CONSUL THAT THE DP IN KIEN GIANG HAS RECEIVED NO INSTRUCTIONS FROM HEADQUARTERS ON THE ROLE OF THE PARTY IN UPCOMING VILLAGE COUNCIL ELECTIONS. HE THOUGHT THE PARTY WOULD DECIDE TO FIELD CANDIDATES IN THOSE ELECTIONS.

(D). VIETNAMESE AND CAMBODIAN CIVILIANS CONTINUE TO BE THE INNOCENT VICTIMS OF THE HONG NGU OFFENSIVE. FOUR ROCKETS STRUCK HONG NGU ON THE MORNING OF APRIL 2 AND THE GVN REPLIED WITH A HEAVY ARTILLERY BARRAGE. THE BATTLE CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE DAY WITH MR IV REPORTING A TOTAL OF 16 ABFS DURING APRIL 2. THE VICE CONSUL COVERING KIEN PHONG REPORTS THAT MANY REFUGEES ARE ARRIVING IN HONG NGU FROM TAN HOI AND THUONG LAC VILLAGES NEAR THE CAMBODIAN BORDER, INDICATING AN INCREASE IN NVA MOVEMENT IN THE AREA. THE HONG NGU ICCS TEAM IS CURRENTLY RADIOING HOURLY SITREPS TO REGION VI HEADQUARTERS.

BARNES
UNQUOTE WHITEHOUSE

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